

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A license management method for contents-processing software for downloading contents data from a computer to an electronic device in a state in which the computer is connected to the electronic device, comprising the steps of:

determining, by the electronic device, upon receiving an acquisition request of license data necessary for installing the software or downloading contents from the computer to the electronic device by the software ~~executing a specific function of the software~~, whether or not license data is issued by referring to management data indicating issue status of license data, stored in a ~~secret-area~~ memory in the electronic device; and

controlling permission or inhibition of issuing the license data stored in the ~~secret-area~~ memory in the electronic device based on the determination result; and
issuing the license data to the computer before transferring the contents data.

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 12, wherein

the control step controls to issue the license data to the computer when the determination result indicates that the license data has not been issued, and to inhibit the issuance of the license data when the determination result indicates that the license data has been issued.

3. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 12, wherein

ID data for identifying a computer which has issued the license data is registered as the management data in the ~~secret-area~~ memory and

permission or inhibition of issuing the license data for the acquisition request is determined by the controller of the electronic device, on the basis of whether the ID data has not been registered and whether the ID data is coincident with ID data of the computer which has issued the acquisition request.

4. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 12, wherein a plurality of memory areas for registering a plurality of ID data are ~~prepared~~ created in the ~~secret-area~~ memory.

5. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2, further comprising returning a content of the management data to a state preceding issue of the license data in response to an uninstall notification of the software that is issued from the computer to the electronic device.

6. (currently amended) A method according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 12, wherein the electronic device includes a contents playback device for recording and playing back contents transferred from the computer, and

the software has a function of managing contents transfer to the electronic device.

7. (original) A method according to claim 6, wherein the software uses license data in the electronic device to perform authentication of whether the electronic device is rightful, and when authentication succeeds, transfers contents to the electronic device.

8. (currently amended) An electronic device capable of recording or playing back contents downloaded from a computer, comprising:

means for storing license data necessary for installing software for contents transfer from the computer to a contents playback device, or executing a specific function of the software, and management data for managing an issue history of the license data; and

means for, upon reception of a license data acquisition request from a computer connected to the contents playback device, determining permission or inhibition of issuing the license data, before transferring the contents, ~~for the acquisition request on~~ the basis of the management data.

9. (currently amended) A device according to claim ~~[[8]]~~ 13, further comprising:

means for returning a content of the management data to a state preceding issue of the license data in response to an uninstall notification of the software from the computer to the electronic device.

10. (currently amended) A computer-readable recording medium which records a computer program installed and used in a computer, wherein the computer program includes:

a procedure of, in installing the computer program or executing a specific function of the computer program, requesting acquisition of license data of an electronic device which stores license data necessary for installing the computer program or executing the specific function, and management data for managing an issue history of the license data; and

a procedure of permitting the install or the execution of the specific function on a condition that rightful license data is acquired from the electronic device; and

wherein the license data is sent to the computer program before the install or the execution of the specific function.

11. (currently amended) A license management method for a contents playback device, comprising the steps of:

requesting, in installing a computer program or executing a specific function of the computer program, acquisition of license data of an electronic device which stores license data necessary for installing the computer program or executing the specific function, and management data for managing an issue history of the license data; and permitting the install or the execution of the specific function on a condition that the rightful license data is acquired from the electronic device,

wherein the license data is sent to the computer program before the install or the execution of the specific function.

12. (new) The method according to claim 1, wherein the memory comprises an internal memory which cannot be accessed by a user or a file system of the computer.

13. (new) The electronic device according to claim 8, wherein the storing means comprises an internal memory which cannot be accessed by a user or a file system of the computer.

14. (new) The license management method according to claim 11, wherein the electronic device comprises an internal memory which stores the license data and the management data and cannot be accessed by a user or a file system of a computer.